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Office of Early Childhood Budget
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Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations

Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening.

My name is John Cattelan and I am here today on behalf of the Connecticut

Alliance of YMCAs. The Alliance represents 23 YMCAs across the state of

Connecticut.

I'm here this evening to offer the Alliance's support for Governor Malloy's

proposal to enact legislation to formally establish the Office of Early

Childhood and to invest in opportunities for more of Connecticut's children to

attend pre-school.

The Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs is a strong supporter of any effort that

will increase affordability and the quality of child care education. We believe

this proposal is a very positive step.

Connecticut's YMCAs, without an office of Early Childhood, receive funding from three state agencies. Coordinating of funding and delivery of services from one state agency is a proposal we strongly support. In addition, we are encouraged by the Governor's proposal to invest funds to improve the early childhood licensing system and finance a structure to measure quality.

Finally, we are encouraged by the Governor's proposal to expand the number of school readiness slots and increase the reimbursement rates for this program. We are also supportive of the increased investment in the Care 4 Kids program and the ultimate goal of universal pre-school for all of Connecticut's children.

I don't believe it is necessary for me to inform the members of the committee about the evidence that supports early childhood education. YMCAs across Connecticut exist to strengthen our communities and every day work with thousands of children, women and men to ensure everyone regardless of age, income or background – has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.